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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000524

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DEPT FOR AF/W, INR/AA  
DOE FOR GEORGE PERSON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: (S) NIGERIA: NSA MUKHTAR - A CLOSET EXTREMIST WE  
NEED TO WATCH

Classified By: Ambassador Robin Renee Sanders for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

11. (S/NF) SUMMARY. Ambassador had a one-plus hour meeting with National Security Advisor Major General Abdullahi Sarki Mukhtar on December 22 to discuss a range of issues, including the recent internecine violence in the northern city of Jos. Mukhtar also voiced his criticism of our bilateral relationship -- which he views as a one issue relationship focused on former EFCC Chairman Ribadu, on top of his negatively colored belief that the U.S. is anti-Islamic. In addition, Mukhtar's comments about several religious groups both in Nigeria and the U.S. were racist and anti-Semitic. Ambassador hit Mukhtar back hard on his views on the U.S. and our respect for Islam, and countered heavily his disparaging remarks about a range of senior official U.S. persons. The conversation was prickly, but USG points and position on respect for religious diversity and official Americans were strongly made throughout. The most useful aspect of the meeting was his information on the days leading up to the Jos crisis. Post believes that we need to be extremely cautious in engaging with Mukhtar, especially in any official U.S.-based meetings in which he may accompany Nigerian President Yar'Adua. His comments and views border on him being a radical fundamentalist as well as anti-U.S.  
END SUMMARY.

12. (S/NF) Ambassador had a knock down, dragged out meeting on December 22 with Nigerian National Security Advisor Major General Abdullahi Sarki Mukhtar. Mukhtar, known as a hawk, should also be known now as a racist and anti-Semite. Mukhtar began the meeting by sharing his views on the U.S.-GON bilateral relationship, which he saw as a one issue relationship centered on former EFCC Chairman Ribadu. Ambassador strongly disavowed him of this claim, noting that the USG focus is on the EFCC as an institution, but clearly stating that we thought the EFCC was floundering and needed to do a lot better as regards to its role in the anti-corruption fight. Mukhtar then turned to his view of the world and the USG, which was as bizarre as it was disconcerting. He said that the "perception is that the USG's goal was to eliminate Islam, like it did with communism." Ambassador said clearly that not only was this not true, but it did not make sense. She directly asked him then whether this "perception" that he was stating was also his personal view; Mukhtar refused to answer. In addition,

she pointed out the range of USG efforts that debunk this perception, pointing not out what the U.S. Mission in Nigeria was doing, but the USG overall, to help build better relations in this area. The exchange continued in this manner for a while before switching to his assessment of the recent U.S. election. Here Mukhtar was equally disparagingly racist, as well as anti-semitic, in his comments. Ambassador told Mukhtar that he was missing the entire point of the democratic process, which calls for respect of diversity -- religious, cultural or ethnic -- and that the U.S. has always strived for that and this past election underscored these values. She added that the NSA did not have a crystal ball to make any predictions as to what the current or upcoming U.S. administration would do on U.S. domestic and foreign policy, nor was it his position to do so. Ambassador then changed the subject to local issues, asking him for a briefing on the recent violence in Jos.

13. (C) Despite the bizarre start of the meeting, Mukhtar was candid in giving a good assessment of the Jos crisis and of Plateau Governor Jang in particular. He basically called Governor Jang an "idiot," telling Ambassador that Jang was warned by senior GON officials, including himself, as much as three weeks before not to hold the election in the manner he did. Jang, he maintained, was trying to ensure that his cousin (who lives in the predominantly Christian Jos South district and financed Jang's election as Governor) became the Local Government Area (LGA) Chairman of the predominantly Hausa/Muslim Jos North district. Mukhtar explained that this was the crux of the problem. He told the Ambassador that Chadians and Nigeriens had participated in

LAGOS 00000524 002 OF 002

the violence, but that they were long time residents of the area rather than recent arrivals. He said that there was no evidence they had initiated the violence. Jang, he contended, was just using this as an excuse for his own failings. He said there were eight Chadian students who were attending the University of Jos who participated in the fighting once it started, while the Nigeriens have been informal workers in the area for decades. Mukhtar told the Ambassador that he wants to find a way for Jang to be removed, or to call for another election that would see him defeated. He implied that the governing Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was looking at options to remove him. In addition, he lamented that the civilian constitution and the "vagaries of democracy," required the federal government to wait for the state to call in military troops. Under the military regime we did not have to listen or wait for governors," he said fondly. (Note: Mukhtar was military Governor of Katsina State from 1987-88), which is Yar,Adua,s home state.)

14. (S/NF) Comment. Mukhtar is a hawk and we have long known that his opinions of the U.S. are less than favorable. In this meeting, he was presented an even more worrisome personality as he provided more insight into his thinking. Ambassador would characterize his thinking as not only racist, anti-Islamic and disparaging of official U.S. persons, but radical and fundamentalistic. This should give us grave concern in his position as Yar,Adua,s National Security Advisor, given his easy access to the President where the later is hearing his strong opinions on the nature of our relationship.

15. (S/NF) Comment Continued. Any USG meeting in which Mukhtar is present should be handled with extreme caution. He is extremely close to certain Arab and Russian elements, and we do not know at this time if those contacts are on the extremist end of the spectrum, but it sounded like it in this meeting with the Ambassador as she listened to some of his dialogue regarding his discussions with both certain Arab nations and Russians on USG policy. He is someone we need to monitor and be careful with regarding any conversation with him, and any access to senior USG officials, particularly in Washington in any meeting he might attend with President

Yar,Adua. His anti-Semitic comments about certain members of the incoming administration need to be taken seriously and we need to limit Mukhtar's access to senior USG officials in Washington for the time being. End Comment.

16. (U) This cable was coordinated with Consulate Lagos. Cable transmitted from Consulate Lagos as Ambassador Sanders is in Lagos this week.  
SANDERS